

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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but the frequent repetitions and the small number of pitches made accompaniment possible, and their voices fell consistently into the fourth interval below those of the men. The women, however, enjoyed their role thoroughly and gave far better support than the men, who made little effort to coordinate their activities. 796
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The songs were arranged in a series of three verses. Each time a new house was entered, the singer started a new series. Matiwana's songs were more elaborate than Nitvary's. Occasionally the old man would make a mistake and have to start the verse over again, but these lapses merely amused him. The only musical instrument used was the tapir hoof rattle. [534]

Quain gives no detailed information on the dances involved, but apparently they were simple, and perhaps partially improvised. Nitvary was the sole person to take special pains with his toilet before leading a dance. At such a time he usually wore a feather headdress and painted his body ornately. [535]
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One of the more important parts of the *ole* ceremony was the complex of activities surrounding the *ole* posts. A few days after the ceremony began several poles were brought into the clearing just outside the village, and the bark was peeled from them. They were rubbed with white clay and painted in colored designs. Each man placed the pole he had decorated upon his shoulders and brought it into the village with shouts and singing. With the poles on their shoulders, they danced about the village, finally placing their burdens upright in holes that had been dug previously in the village plaza. The children helped by packing dirt around them. The women then smeared red *urucu* dye on the bases of the poles and just below the upper ends. Tufts of cotton were put on top by both men and women. An offering in the form of fish on *beija* was placed in front of the posts. Later in the afternoon, and early every afternoon for the next two weeks, the men ate together among these poles. Their attitude in this ceremonial milieu was certainly not one of special reverence, for they draped two blankets Quain had given them over the posts for shade. 796
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Nearly every day additional food offerings were placed in front of the posts. One post was given special attention. This was Nukekerehe, which was said to be malignant. However, fear of Nukekerehe was mixed with jokes. Quain was told one night that the men would not go to bed until he did, for if he stayed up long Nukekerehe would surely eat him. Weeks later, when the posts were pulled up and brought into the houses of their owners, the man carrying this pole stamped his feet at the children and pretended anger, much to everyone's amusement. On one occasion Matiwana performed a ritual in which he was apparently acting the part of Nukekerehe. He made wrathful noises and jumped about in front of the post, before which were two bowls of manioc soup. 796
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526 would be terminated by mutual consent and without the need for either
[152] contestant to concede defeat.⁶ The wrestlers were often pushed around
considerably, but except for grunts of effort, there were no expressions
of pain or anger. However, when Quain tried to teach the Trumai men
to box, even the lightest punch caused them to retire. They claimed that
the *karahiba* sport was much too rough.

562 Trumai women do not "know how" to wrestle, but the Kamayurá
526 women wrestled to entertain guests. It was common opinion in the region
that Trumai women did not compare favorably with Kamayurá women.
186 Even the Trumai men agreed on this point. After a visit to the Kama-
648 yurá village, the precocious young Yanahi was vociferous in his approval
171 of them. His admiration was due chiefly to the *jamyrikuma*, a Kamayurá
female song and dance in which the women flapped their breasts and
went through other provocative motions. He also described how they
had pushed their twine belts down low on their buttocks, which to him
was a very suggestive act. After the dance the women wrestled. Jak-
walu, a Mehinaku, was the only woman in the Trumai village who
could wrestle, a fact that suggests that the females of this group also
practiced the sport. She demonstrated her ability only on intertribal
visits.

574 The Trumai women did not entertain guests, except insofar as visitors
535 forced their attentions on the unmarried ones. The only occasions on
which they were known to sing and dance were at certain ceremonies
when they served as a chorus to the men.

533 Except for the use of pan-pipes, which the men played in the morning,
[534] all music was connected with religious ceremonial. The pan-pipes con-
[196] sisted of a half-dozen hollow reeds of different lengths laced together.
Ceremonial singing was melodious, and the Trumai enjoyed singing.
[123] They frequently requested Quain to sing in the men's circle. The re-
quests were always phrased on behalf of the women and children.
Visits from members of other tribes always called for a performance
by the ethnographer.

522 Humor consisted mostly of practical jokes played at the expense of
571 others. Jokes were always perpetrated by the men; the women served
occasionally as butts. This does not mean that the men were gayer or
more light-hearted than the women, for the contrary was actually the
case. The women enjoyed each other's company more. They gossiped
and laughed together, worked together, and generally wore a pleasanter
expression. For the men, jokes were important as a means of recognition
and assertion. They were always performed for an audience.

Teasing the women was also a popular male diversion. This was often
done by ignoring them completely during a conversation. Yati was a

⁶ This may be true only of bouts between Trumai, as Oberg (1963, p. 69) notes
that a man is defeated when he is thrown on his back.

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Indians practice on the village plaza and, as a target, plant a shaft which bears at the top a cylindrical or conical piece of cork wood.

The throwing board, in our case, where there is no "board" often called a throwing stick,* is now a rare weapon which was

* For our case the best expression would be "arrow thrower." "Throwing stick" too easily gives rise to confusion with sticks that are thrown.

found among only the two Tupí tribes, the Kamayurá /Camayura/ and Auetô, and among the Trumai. It was the greatest ethnological surprise of our journey. Ehrenreich then also came across it among the Karayá on the Araguay. Replaced by the bow, it has remained in active use only among the wood-poor Eskimo. The North American Indians, as far as is known, were not familiar with it; among the ancient Mexicans and among the Maya, as well as among the inhabitants of Colombia, it appears in limited use, though a wider distribution in early times may be inferred; it is regarded as the weapon of the Inca warriors; and finally we see individual examples of it among South American primitive peoples, especially Tupís, on the high Amazon as well as in eastern Brazil. Among our tribes, too, the throwing stick had lost its real importance, or at least was on the point of losing it. Nevertheless, in every house there were more throwing boards than bows; the Indians said that they never used the weapon any more for hunting, to be sure, but certainly in war. In 1884, when the Trumai appeared before our camp, they had no throwing boards with them; the stone balls with which the darts are equipped for serious use were not present in any number among the Auetô and Kamayurá; they, too, had to get them from the Trumai, and thus, for the Tupí tribes at any rate, if only because of their geographical location, the days of the throwing board are numbered. As a sporting weapon, however, it still enjoys great esteem and assiduous use; in connection with the dance, I shall also have to mention the throwing-board dance, which portrays being wounded in battle.

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According to everything that the natives told us about the festivals, they primarily amounted to what they thought were riotous feasting and drinking bouts. Bakaíri legend describes the origin to us in the same way. Kame, the tribal ancestor of the Arinos tribes, built the first flute house, carved the first flute, invited his friends to the dance, and served them starch-paste. Keri, the tribal ancestor of the Bakaíri, who most eagerly competed with Kame in invention, for his part invited Kami to the dance; the legend tells us in what manner the festival took place and speaks of the makanari and the imeo, the straw costumes without face-masks, but with characterizing and partly disguising headdresses, as Keri's invention.

"Keri, too, called his people together. Toward evening they went dancing on the village plaza. Then from the house Keri fetched pogu to be drunk. Immediately thereafter they plaited makanari. Keri called Kame. Many people came and Keri was master of the dance. They danced all day. Toward evening they rested. After dark they danced all through the night. Early in the morning they went to the river to bathe. After the bath they came to the flute house. They began with the imeo and danced the whole day. They likewise danced all night. -- Then the festival was at an end."

A noteworthy feature of the legend is the circumstance that the different tribes united for the dance festival. It is a universal custom that the villages invite one another to the big festivals. Friendly neighboring tribes also send numerous participants. In 1884, when we met the Trumai and Kamayurá /Camayura/ together (see p. 105), the two tribes had just celebrated a joint festival.

For one thing it is understandable under these circumstances that an exchange and leveling out between the customs and dance gear of the tribes takes place. /298/ Each tribe knew the songs of the neighboring tribes, without understanding their content precisely, as we learned in numerous cases; one tribe would also become acquainted with new types of masks from another, and finally the mereschu design, to which I shall come back after describing the masks, gained its general distribution.

2: Steinen--368 E,D-5 (1884, 1887-1888) 1894 SP7 Bacairi

Trumai SP23
Aueto SP6
Kamayura

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Illustrations in "Grad' aus dem Wirtshaus... /Just out of the Pub/," in which the houses, the pumps, and the lanterns have exactly the same faces.

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[97] Besides the hüvát masks there was also found among the Kamayurá a huge plaiting reminiscent of the kualóhe of the Bakairí, which had approximately the form of a mushroom with skin and stem. The upper body of the wearer, approximately to the navel, was in the cap, which was plaited over a large cross-hoop, while the stem of the mushroom was formed by the straw curtain hanging down. One quadrant of the surface of the cap, set off by feeler-like pieces of vine, was painted with the mereschu design; on the top a stem was added, similar to the imeo of the Bakairí, but thickly plaited round, painted with mereschus, and ending in a grass tassel. The thing was called turuá; in Guaraní turú means "all kinds of worms living in the water," whereas in Tupí, according to Martius, it means *Tenthredo*, leaf wasp.



Fig. 115. Wooden mask with fish pictures. Kamayurá. (1/6 nat. size /as shown in the original illustration/.)

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535 Trumai. Exclusively cotton plaited masks, called hukráke, zarumuká, kuahahá, the various meanings of which I do not know. It should be remembered that we met these people in flight, and that they may have left wooden masks behind. It may also come from the fact that a very large mask without facial parts appears only as an oval frame with cotton plaiting (black, with red center stripe) stretched over it and also provided with an incomplete buriti hood. In spite of the cotton, one cannot speak of "weaving"; the strands were crudely plaited,

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as for straw mats. Some /318/ of the plaited masks are of the same type as among the Auetō and Kamayurá, but usually the entire surface of the texture is covered with the black mereschu design on a white background, in one case with horizontal rhombuses and without neck stripe or center stripe, while on others the latter is reduced to a black line. /Figs. 116 and 117 appear here./

Eyes and nose are usually three equal-sized lumps of wax next to one another in a row and knotted on with a piece of buriti fiber. On only one mask is a pair of bright shell disks pressed on the eye-lumps. The mouth is a black wax ring that looks like a pessary and so large that nose and mouth have room in it. All the facial parts are confined to the upper half, in fact the upper third, of the oval.

On a number of masks the painting is simply a black background with a red center stripe or a red background with a black center stripe in which nose and mouth are placed or which extends only to the mouth.

/319/ In the case of three masks, however, there is more. On No. 1: black background, white center stripe accompanied by a white line on either side; touching it is the triangular cheek part which consists of a red and a white stripe, the black background stripe, and a red border triangle. The mask reminds one very much of the first wax mask of the Auetō, Fig. 107 /see p. 360/. No. 2: black /Fig. 118 appears here/ background, red center stripe, two white border triangles on either side, outlined by a white zigzag line. No. 3: white background on the outside and top, inside a black background the width of the eyes and to a height to include the eyes, with a red center stripe up to the mouth ring.

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II. Common Origin of the Masks and the Mereschu Design.

We have no difficulty understanding the Bakairi who put on animal figures plaited out of straw and heads of animal skins, but we cannot help but find it strange that there are facial parts of human form on the animal masks. One would expect a dove

[Text Continues on p. 371]

2: Steinen--370E,D-5 (1884, 1887-1888) 1894 SP7 Bacairi
 Trumai SP23

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Fig. 116. Trumaf mask,
 black and red. (1/4 nat.
 size /as shown in the origi-
 nal illustration/.)



Fig. 117. Trumaf mask with
mereschu design. (1/4 nat.
 size /as shown in the original
 illustration/.)

2: Steinen--371E,D-5 (1884, 1887-1888) 1894 SP7 Bacairi SP7
Trumai SP23

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mask, for example, to have a bill and not a nose with a mouth beneath it. On seeing such a dancer, one has the feeling that he is going to call out to us pleasantly: "Don't think that I am really a dove. I am a

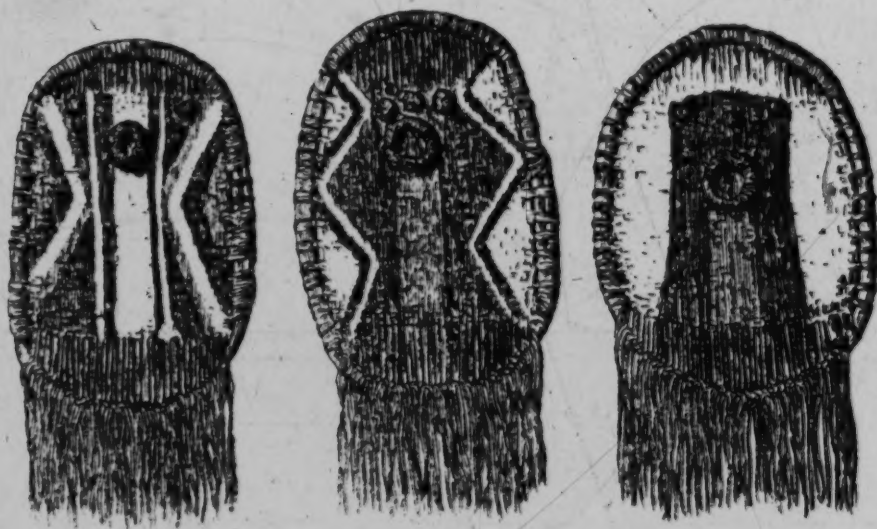


Fig. 118. Trumai masks, painted black, white, and red. (1/6 nat. size /as shown in the original illustration/.)

human being, like you, and am merely /320/ pretending to be a dove as you can hear by my cooing and can convince yourself by the painted dots on my feathers."

"Know ye, therefore, that I am Hans Schnock, the carpenter Not a wild lion, forsooth, and not a lion's wife."

In fact, the masks are not by any means merely face masks. Eyes, nose, and mouth are restricted to the upper part of the field, and the center stripe marks the continuation of the body with the neck; wing, fin, side line, neck and shoulder markings appear next to it. On the fish makanari of the Bakaïrî, which is a work made with great care and love, we miss the mouth and see a large fish in the middle of the mereschu design. The Auetô, finally, look out from under their masks, through the hood; moreover, a large part of the wooden-mask eyes are made so that the holes are too small and not the proper distance apart to be suitable for looking through; they are for the spectator, not for the wearer.

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How does the artist arrive at this peculiarity? After all, on the frieze (cf. Plate 21/see p. 281/) the fish are drawn as they swim. Well, on the masks the fish also stand on their tails; one need only look at the fish mananari of the Bakairi, page 349, and the black Kamayurá mask, page 368. Indeed, the only time we come across the mereschu fish as a single individual outside the net, on the gull mask of the Bakairi, page 289, Fig. 44, it is standing vertically. On the woven masks, however, which are the ones that matter since they are the oldest, the fish was drawn in a position unnatural in itself and for the fish, /322/ because they have the elongated oval position corresponding to the face; if one imagines the piava of the fish mananari, page 349, as horizontal, one will realize, first, that the fish would then be contracted, secondly, that it would look positively unnatural to have the fish swimming across the face because it would be contrary to the main direction. A glance at door and window arrangements shows the same requirement for us,

Thus, net and fish were painted with upright rhombuses on the elongated oval mask. Look at the great number of the mask illustrations with the mereschu design: the same position everywhere. We saw only one exception and it proves the rule rather than running counter to it. This is a Trumaj mask. The good Trumaj, however, borrowed the masks from the Kamayurá, just as they learned of cotton and the sieve-mat among them, and they designate them with the Tupi name. They did not take part in the developmental process.

We now also understand the close connection between net and mereschu fish and the abundant production of this particular fish. Within each mesh was drawn a fish, which had to be small, because otherwise it would not fit in the space, which also had the same rhomboid shape as the net mesh. Finally, we understand how, with the fine work, the representation of the head, fins, and tail was done by filling in the corners. In short, everything agrees so excellently, both for the design and for the course of development, that I regard the proof as demonstrated, insofar as this is possible.

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535 "song," and therefore their chief dance was called yaurí-maraká. One man also gave a strange performance by dancing bent over and rubbing two arrows over the ground, a woman behind him: kurukú he.

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533 The women, kunyá, who are, of course, regarded as the best booty, were often mentioned in the songs. In the dance pantomime, especially during the amurikumá dance, it was often made clear that the women were handing over fish. The dances start early in the morning and last until sunset.

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535 Dance clubs, similar to the one of the Kamayurá, illustrated, in part with plaiting prettily around them, were also found among the Trumai. Among the Auetō we obtained a dance ornament, the shape of which was reminiscent of the horsetail of a drum major: from a piece of hoop, on either side and in the center, hung tails of buriti fibers almost half a meter long.

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[412] For the dance with hūvát masks among the Kamayurá there were two staffs, haéatê, 80 centimeters long, at the tip of which the set of teeth of a dogfish was plaited into a /325/ triangular attachment in such a way that the two long pointed teeth, the favorite boring and cutting instruments of the Indian, stuck out at the top.

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535 As may be seen, the dance has its psychological development. It clearly reflects the progress of culture. In the beginning the animal is presented in pantomime, its voice is imitated, and its shape copied in the straw masquerade; the masking art with its fertile motifs for all painting develops from the fish net -- here the implement with its technique has already become the chief focus of interest as over against the animal figure. The throwing



Fig. 120.
Dogfish dance-staff.
Kamayurá. (1/6 nat.
size /as shown in the
original illustration/.)